

# Position paper: The ketogenic diet

This document provides an overview of the ketogenic diet, The Brain Tumour Charity's position, and what we are doing to address the issues raised.

## What is the ketogenic diet?

The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) defines a ketogenic diet (KD) as a 'specific diet that is high in fat but low in carbohydrates and protein' (1).

## What is the ketogenic diet used for?

The KD is sometimes used for the management of epilepsy in young children for seizures which have not responded to appropriate anti-epileptic drugs (1). There has been little research done on the benefits of the diet in adults, and it is no longer recommended in the case of adults with epilepsy induced seizures. People affected by a brain tumour should consult their clinician on the best course of treatment.

At present, there is no evidence from clinical trials in humans that the KD can be used to treat the brain tumour itself.

## The Brain Tumour Charity's position

The Brain Tumour Charity welcomes any new findings on how diet can have an impact on the treatment of a brain tumour or the quality of life of those with a brain tumour. We do not currently campaign for the KD to be made more widely available as a treatment for brain tumours because its efficacy has yet to be proven in a robust clinical trial. An overview of the evidence on the ketogenic diet is outlined in our [fact sheet on diet](#).

## What we are doing

Our research strategy, *A Cure Can't Wait*, commits to enhancing the care and quality of life for people with a brain tumour through investment in research (2). One aim is to analyse long term survivors to see what we can learn from their response to treatment as well as other environmental factors such as diet.

## References

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. The epilepsies: the diagnosis and management of the epilepsies in adults and children in primary and secondary care. [Internet]. 2015. Available from: <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg137>
2. The Brain Tumour Charity. A cure can't wait: Our research strategy 2015-2020 [Internet]. 2015. Available from: <http://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/Resources/SDBTT/Documents/research-strategy-final-v2.pdf>